

REMARKS

With this amendment, Applicant cancels claims 1 and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of claims 1 and 9.

Applicant has also added claims 15-20. Claims 2-8 and 10-20 are all the claims pending in the application.

1. Double Patenting

The Examiner has provisionally rejected claims 1-14 under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1-6, 11-14 and 16-19 of co-pending Application No. 10/290,335, respectively.

Applicant has canceled the conflicting claims in Application No. 10/290,335. Applicant respectfully requests that the double patenting rejection be withdrawn.

Applicant notes that claims 7, 8, 10 and 14 have been modified to correct for inconsistencies and for clarity.

2. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikenoue *et al.* (US 5,168,303) [“Ikenoue”] in view of Kubo *et al.* (6,545,710) [“Kubo”].

Applicant has canceled claims 1 and 9 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikenoue in view of Kubo and Shiraiwa *et al.* (US 6,160,579) [“Shiraiwa”].

Applicant has modified claim 2 to depend on claim 3, which has not been rejected on the merits.

3. New Claims

With this amendment, Applicant adds claims 15-20. Applicant submits that these claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency, as well as the features set forth therein.

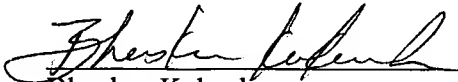
Applicant respectfully requests entry of these claims since the subject matter of these claims corresponds to that of original claims 2, 7 and 8, which have already been examined.

4. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


Bhaskar Kakarla
Registration No. 54,627

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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